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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the meeting of the Reading and Writing Advisory Committee of the New Jersey Basic Skills Council with selected high school English teachers and administrators. This panel established cut scores for statewide interpretation of the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test (NJCBSPT). The NJCBSPT is administered to all students admitted to New Jersey public colleges and universities. It is a placement test for remedial courses, according to standards set by each college, and a statewide basic skills assessment instrument. By advance agreement, the panelists used the Nedelsky Method for setting basic skills proficiency cut scores. Ground rules were made on the first day, objective test probability judgments on the second, and essay judgments on the third. Cut scores established are: Reading Comprehension, 165; Sentence Structure, 165; Logical Relationships, 168; Essay, 7; Composition, 169; Total English, 165. Attachments include: a description of the NJCBSPT; a list of conference panelists; the writing rubric; a Nedelsky Method Scoring Sheet; the essay rubric and scoring sheet; and a memorandum containing three panel recommendations and comments concerning the panel's limitations and potential. (BS)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

MEMORANDUM

July 18, 1980

TO: Basic Skills Council

FROM: Donald Edge, Director DE
Basic Skills Council

SUBJECT: Establishing Cut Scores on the NJCBSPT Tests of Language Skills

In order to establish New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test language skills cut scores (that is, the scores that are most likely to distinguish between remedial and non-remedial students), the Reading and Writing Advisory Committee of the Basic Skills Council met for two and one-half days at the Henry Chauncey Conference Center at Educational Testing Service in Princeton. Working with the Committee were five high school English teachers and administrators.

This panel employed an established method that requires that faculty analyze the multiple-choice language skills test and determine the probable number of items that an entering college freshman who does not need remediation should be expected to answer correctly. This probable number of correct answers, determined by faculty judgment, is called a cutting score or a cut score, and scores below the cut score, in the professional opinion of these faculty, probably indicate a need for remediation.

In addition to an analysis of the multiple-choice language skills tests, the panel also judged sixty pre-selected NJCBSPT essays and determined an essay cut score.

The NJCBSPT cut scores that were established reflect the panel's judgment of the scores that distinguish remedial and non-remedial students among the freshmen entering New Jersey public colleges and universities in the fall. These scores are not meant to establish standards for any one college: this may only be done by faculty at each college. If a college faculty chooses to employ the statewide panel's method for setting cut scores, it is critically important that the multiple-choice test items be examined in light of locally developed specific objectives firmly established by local consensus and referred to as each item is judged. By this method an institution establishes a cut score that reflects local standards.

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While specific objectives are crucial in establishing cut scores for placement in specific courses, such objectives are inappropriate in establishing statewide cut scores that are developed with no single college, course, or standard in mind. Instead, general statewide cut scores are arrived at by a panel representative of New Jersey colleges and familiar with the language skills of entering college freshmen.

The attached paper describes the method for establishing cut scores on the third version of the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test.

Attachment

Establishing Cut Scores on the
New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test

This paper describes the experience of a panel of New Jersey educators gathered at the Henry Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton for the purpose of establishing cut scores for the multiple-choice and essay components of the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test (NJCBSPT) that is administered to all students entering New Jersey public colleges and universities and certain voluntary independent colleges (Attachment A is a description of the test). The panel was composed of college English faculty--members of the Reading and Writing Advisory Committee to the New Jersey Basic Skills Council; invited to work with the Committee were high school English teachers and administrators recommended for their expertise and for their ties to professional organizations and/or highly visible remedial programs. Since the NJCBSPT cut scores (that is, the scores that are most likely to distinguish between the remedial and non-remedial students) are used in public statements concerning the basic skills proficiencies of students entering New Jersey colleges from New Jersey high schools, the inclusion of New Jersey secondary school educators was considered appropriate and essential. A list of panelists is included as Attachment B.

The New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test program is established by a resolution of the New Jersey Board of Higher Education; the resolution calls for the administration of the test to all students entering New Jersey public colleges and universities. The test is to be administered to students after admission, and the test results are to be used to place students in remedial courses according to the standards established by each college.

In addition to serving as a placement test, the NJCBSPT is also a statewide basic skills assessment instrument for charting anticipated increases in statewide mean scores, and for serving as a common measure in describing the basic skills standards of the various college sectors (community colleges, state colleges, Rutgers--The State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology). Annually the Basic Skills Council reports on the results by college and sector for the entering college freshmen, and in that report the Council sets for each part of the test a cut score that indicates proficiency according to Council standards. The Council also reports annually on the NJCBSPT aggregate results for those New Jersey high schools that have test scores for ten or more students.

Setting College Cut Scores

For the most part, the methods used by institutions to set standards include the following, although some institutions use methods based on considerations not cited here.*

*At certain colleges, placement into remedial courses is based almost exclusively on NJCBSPT scores; other colleges use prediction equations of varying complexity.

1. Standards are set from state norms (usually the mean standard score)

2. Standards are set by faculty review of tests

3. Standards of comparable institutions are used as a guide

4. Standards are based on a college's own norming studies

5. Standards are set to accord with what is perceived to be statewide policy (i.e., the Basic Skills Council's proficiency standards)

6. Standards are set to accord with the number of seats allocated to basic skills courses

7. Standards are set by each division or department.

The assortment of methods used to set cut scores is misleading: by far the most widespread method is faculty judgment. New Jersey is not unique in this regard, and College Credit and Placement by Examination: 1978 Guide to Institutional Policies indicates that institutions across the nation rely heavily on collective faculty wisdom in establishing cut scores used to award credit or to determine placement.

Upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Basic Skills Council's Tests and Measurements Advisory Committee, the Reading and Writing Advisory Committee agreed to analyze the content of the language skills test according to established procedures in order to determine what might be regarded as cut scores useful for statewide interpretation of NJCBSPT results, but not meant in any way to set standards for individual New Jersey post-secondary institutions. They were assisted in this work by selected secondary school educators.

The Panelists

The panel, chaired by the Director of the New Jersey Basic Skills Assessment Program, included eight college English teachers, one college philosophy teacher, a representative from the Department of Higher Education, two high school English teachers (one a department chair), the vice-principal of an urban high school basic skills program, a high school language arts supervisor, and an Education Information Center basic skills supervisor. One secondary school administrator excused herself from the panel after the Friday evening meeting.

The panelists represented community colleges, state colleges, the state university, independent colleges, secondary and post-secondary administration, and high schools; in addition to sector representation, there were representatives from north, south, and central New Jersey, from high school districts and colleges classified as urban, suburban, and rural/suburban. Five of the participants were female; one of these was black, the only minority representative.

Choice of the Nedelsky Method

The panelists had agreed in advance to set NJCBSPT language skills multiple-choice cut scores using the Nedelsky method as set forth by Michael Zieky and Samuel Livingston in Manual for Setting Standards on the Basic Skills Assessment Tests (1977); panelists received copies of the Manual in advance of the conference. The task of the panelists was to determine a level of performance on the multiple-choice tests that indicates readiness for regular freshman writing instruction and minimizes the probability of placing in a college course students who would be better served in basic skills courses in reading and/or writing. The Nedelsky method was considered appropriate because the Reading and Writing Advisory Committee had agreed to base cut scores on a content analysis of the test, and because the Nedelsky method had been used to set cut scores at several New Jersey colleges.

The Nedelsky Method

The Nedelsky method for setting a basic skills proficiency cut score requires that a panel estimate the number of options in each test item that the minimally qualified student should be expected to eliminate as incorrect. It is then assumed that this student will guess and select at random from among those responses not identified as wrong. On a NJCBSPT four-choice item, the student who eliminates no responses as incorrect has a .25 probability of selecting the correct answer by random guessing; if one response can be eliminated, the student has a .33 probability of selecting the correct response from the three not known to be wrong; if two responses are eliminated, the probability is .50; if three are eliminated, the probability is one hundred percent (1.) that the student will identify the correct response.

The sum of each panelist's probabilities is the panelist's estimated number of correct answers that the minimally competent student should score on the test. The panel's scores are added and averaged to produce the cut score.

The First Day: Agreeing to the Ground Rules

The first day began with an evening meeting that lasted from 7:45 until 11:15. The meeting opened with a general discussion of the nature and purposes of the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test, the various statewide reports based on NJCBSPT data, and the need for statewide cut scores.

It was agreed that, once established by consensus, the ground rules must be heeded and panelists should remain for the conference only if they could in good conscience support the panel's tasks and methods.

The panel also agreed to develop rubrics to be used in judging the multiple-choice test and the essay, to establish cut scores for the multiple-choice test using the Nedelsky method, and to assess the essays for college-level writing.

There was discussion of the multiple-choice test judgment rubric, focusing on "should" and proposing "would" in the key question:

> How many of the distractors on this item should the entering college freshman be able to eliminate as clearly incorrect? By definition, a college-level freshman does not need remediation.

It was finally agreed that "should," in the sense of expectation or probability, was the appropriate word, and that "would," suggesting certainty or habitual action, was inappropriate for the panel's task of determining faculty expectations of entering college students. (The should--would distinction plagued panelists throughout the two and one-half day conference.)

The proficiency of the entering freshman was then discussed, and it was agreed that the panel was to consider those students thought by the freshman composition instructors to be appropriately placed in the first week of classes. Many of these students might not complete the course, some might fail. The panel's task was simply to estimate what an entering freshman who does not need language skills remediation should identify as correct and incorrect multiple-choice distractors on a fairly easy test of language skills.

The panel agreed to an essay assessment procedure, and to a rubric:

> Is this an acceptable essay for a college student entering a regular freshman composition course? By definition, this student does not need remediation.

There was an extended discussion of freshman composition entrance standards (see Attachment C); the panelists agreed that the document could be accepted as a whole, and that while it was useful in stimulating and directing discussion, it could not be used to set sharply defined limits for the panel's work in setting cut scores. For this work, the panel agreed they could rely on individual judgment.

The Second Day: Judging the Objective Tests

The second day began with a review of the multiple-choice test rubric. Then, the panel leader read the rubric as each question was considered, and panelists were asked to mark on a prepared scoring sheet (see Attachment D) their expectation or probability that a minimally competent student in a regular freshman composition course should answer the question correctly. After the panelists privately recorded their probabilities for an item, the leader asked for a show of hands for each of the probabilities - .25, .33, .50, and 1. Usually there was disparity, and the panelists who gave the highest and the lowest probabilities were invited to explain the reasons for their decisions. This was followed by general discussion, and then each panelist marked a final judgment on the scoring sheet; the final judgment might be the same as the initial one marked privately, or it might have been revised as a result of the discussion.

Working through 125 items took seven and one-half hours of intense concentration. The data derived from the Nedelsky judging of the NJCBSPT multiple-choice language skills test are shown in Table 1.

The Third Day: Judging the Essays

On the third day the panel reviewed and agreed to the essay judging rubric:

> Is this an acceptable essay for a college student entering a regular freshmen composition course? By definition, this student does not need remediation.

The panel's task was to read sixty pre-selected and pre-arranged essays drawn from earlier statewide essay readings (the essay topic is included as Attachment E). These essays clustered around what experience suggested would be close to the borderline considered to be acceptable college-entrance writing. While there was a representative sample of essays at all but one score level within the 2-12 range, there were relatively few samples from the extremes--and no top scoring essays--this in order to save time and to focus attention on the middle range where judgment establishes cut scores.

In earlier statewide essay readings the sample essays had been scored independently by two experienced readers using individual scores of 1-6 to produce the total score of 2-12. (For a full explanation of the holistic scoring procedure, see the New Jersey Basic Skills Council publication, Scoring the Essays on the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test.) Panelists were not told these earlier scores; in effect they were defining the readers' scores in terms of college-level writing.

The panel read 60 different essays and classified them in two groups; essays judged to demonstrate an acceptable level of writing for a college student entering a regular freshman composition course, and essays judged to be below that level. As with the multiple-choice test judgments, there was discussion and some score changes before the final judgments for each essay were recorded on a score sheet (a sample score sheet is included as Attachment F).

A tally of the panelists' judgments, together with the actual score for each essay, is presented in Table 2.

The general pattern of the panelists' response to the essays is similar to that of the essay readers, and it is clear that in the average judgment of the panelists an essay receiving a score of 7 or more is acceptable writing for a student entering a regular college freshman composition course.

There are a few anomalies in the cut score table. For the most part these reflect the fact that the panel members (many of whom also participate in the holistic readings) are, when they read a paper in terms of the writer's need for remediation, asking questions somewhat different from the questions readers ask when they read a paper in terms of its overall value.

TABLE 1

Table of Panelist's Scores on the NJCBSPT Objective Tests, and the Derived Cut Scores

Panelist	Reading Comprehension	Sentence Structure	Logical Relations
1	28.49	23.66	37.82
2	30.83	27.16	40.33
3	27.49	22.58	36.15
4	29.99	28.24	39.16
5	31.33	26.49	40.82
6	31.00	23.66	43.33
7	31.16	25.16	40.83
8	28.58	25.24	37.16
9	27.23	24.08	40.49
10	35.83	31.83	47.00
11	31.50	28.00	41.50
12	35.50	28.33	41.66
13	30.82	24.41	44.33
14	30.98	27.33	39.83
15	24.32	22.66	43.50
Average Raw Score	30.34	25.95	40.93
Cut Scores (Average Raw Scores Converted to Scaled Scores)	165	165	168

TABLE 2

ESSAY NUMBER	SCORE	PANELIST RESPONSE (Is this college level?) YES	NO
9	2	0	15
24	2	0	15
4	3	0	14
11	3	0	15
3	4	2	13
17	4	2	11
22	4	0	15
28	4	2	13
55	4	0	15
2	5	1	14
8	5	8	7
12	5	3	12
16	5	6	9
20	5	7	8
25	5	10	5
29	5	1	14
30	5	3	12
39	5	2	13
49	5	0	15
1	6	9	6
5	6	11	4
10	6	1	14
13	6	12	3
15	6	13	2
19	6	7	8
32	6	0	15
42	6	1	14
45	6	3	12
54	6	2	13
60	6	3	12
14	7	15	0
26	7	12	3
31	7	15	0
34	7	13	2
35	7	7	8
37	7	15	0
47	7	6	9
52	7	11	4
56	7	7	8
58	7	15	0
59	7	15	0
6	8	15	0
18	8	14	1
21	8	15	0
27	8	14	1
33	8	15	0
44	8	6	7
46	8	12	3
48	8	15	0
53	8	2	13
57	8	13	2
7	9	15	0
36	9	15	0
38	9	15	0
43	9	13	2
50	9	15	0
40	10	15	0
51	10	15	0
23	11	14	1
41	11	15	0

Cut Score

Panel Findings

The panel's exercise with the Nedelsky method produced the following NJCBSPT cut scores (scaled scores):

1.	Reading Comprehension	165
2.	Sentence Structure	165
3.	Logical Relationships	168
4.	Essay	7
5.	Composition (2 + 3 + 4)	169
6.	Total English (1 + 2 + 3 + 4)	165

The panel agreed to meet and formally adopt a report.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Description of the NJCBSPT

B. Conference Panelists

C. The Writing Rubric

D. Nedelsky Method Scoring Sheet

E. NJCBSPT Essay Topic

F. The Essay Rubric and Scoring Sheet

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INFORMATION BULLETIN 1980

NEW JERSEY COLLEGE BASIC SKILLS PLACEMENT TEST

State of New Jersey • Board of Higher Education •
Department of Higher Education • Basic Skills Council

PURPOSE OF THE TEST

The New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test is designed to help you now that you have been admitted to a New Jersey public or participating private college by providing information about your individual skills in language and mathematics. This information will assist you and your counselor in making decisions about the kinds of courses you are prepared to take. The information will be used to determine whether or not you need special help in particular areas in order to succeed at college-level work and to assist in placing you in particular courses or course sections suited to your preparation.

The test measures your skills in reading, writing, computation, and elementary algebra. The full test requires 3 hours and 15 minutes. Except for the 20-minute essay section, the test is made up entirely of multiple-choice questions.

WHO MUST TAKE THE TEST

The New Jersey Board of Higher Education requires that the following students take the test:

- all freshmen who will be entering a New Jersey public college in the fall of 1978 and at any date thereafter;
- all full-time and part-time freshmen who are seeking a degree;
- any student who does not initially seek a degree but who registers for a course that would result in the accumulation of 12 or more credits;
- any freshman transfer student who has not taken the test.

An institution may require additional categories of freshman students to be tested. Also, a number of private colleges have chosen to participate in the testing program.

Students will be tested only *after* they have been admitted to a college. First-time students who hold a bachelor's degree need not be tested. Students enrolled in a bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) program will be tested when they have completed such a program.

WHERE THE TEST WILL BE GIVEN

The Basic Skills Placement Test will be given at all New Jersey public and participating private colleges. Your college will notify you where on campus the test will be administered.

WHEN THE TEST WILL BE GIVEN

Each college will schedule the date and time for administering the test to its students. Your college will notify you of the date on which the test will be administered.

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU ON THE DAY OF THE TEST

On the day of the test, be sure to take with you

- Your Social Security Number
- Several No. 2 lead pencils with erasers
- A pen for writing the essay

TESTING REGULATIONS

No books, dictionaries, electronic calculators, or papers of any kind are allowed in the test room. Anyone who gives or receives help during the test, uses notes or books or papers of any kind, or removes test materials or notes from the room will not be permitted to continue the test. The college will invalidate any test score if there is any reason to question its validity. Before exercising this authority, the college will offer the student an opportunity to take the test again.

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TEST SCORES

All scores will be reported to your college, and your college will determine the procedures for communicating information about test results to you.

You will receive a score for each section of the test. This means you will receive a score for the Essay, Reading Comprehension, Sentence Structure, Logical Relationships, Computation, and Elementary Algebra. In addition, you will receive a Composition score (made up of your scores on the Essay, Sentence Structure, and Logical Relationships sections of the test) and a Total English score (made up of your scores on the Essay, Reading Comprehension, Sentence Structure, and Logical Relationships sections of the test). For Reading Comprehension, Sentence Structure, and Logical Relationships, you will also receive cluster scores, that is, scores for clusters of questions dealing with certain aspects of the main skill tested. You will not receive cluster scores for the Computation and Elementary Algebra sections of the test.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY COLLEGE BASIC SKILLS PLACEMENT TEST

Q. Why am I being asked to take this test?

A. The results of this test will help place you in courses for which you are best prepared.

Q. Is this an admission test?

A. No. The test has nothing to do with your being admitted to college. In fact, you will not take the test until *after* you have been admitted.

Q. I have not yet been admitted. Can I still take the test?

A. No. You will have to wait until you've been admitted to college.

Q. I have taken courses at another college. Do I need to take this test?

A. Yes. All freshmen who have not taken this test must do so.

Q. I have taken other standardized tests for credit or placement. Do I need to take this test, too?

A. Yes. The test is designed to give you and your college advisors information different from that provided by other tests.

Q. I am not sure whether or not I am required to take the test. What should I do?

A. The staff of the Admissions Office of your college will be able to answer your question or direct you to the appropriate office.

Q. What is the passing grade on the test?

A. You neither pass nor fail this test. Instead, your test results will be used to place you in courses according to your present skills.

Q. Why are you testing English?

A. Reading and writing skills are essential for success in college. You must read well enough to understand your college textbooks and write well enough to prepare term papers and complete essay tests.

Q. Why are you testing mathematics?

A. Certain quantitative skills and mathematical concepts are necessary for success in many phases of college-level work. These are the skills and concepts the test measures.

Q. How do I prepare for the test?

A. You need not do anything special to prepare for this test. It measures reading, writing, and mathematics skills which are developed over a period of years. Come to the test ready to use what you have learned.

Q. I have completed high school. Shouldn't I be ready for college-level work?

A. Probably. But, if you have not had very much practice in writing essays or in careful reading or in basic mathematics, you still might benefit from special instruction.

Q. Suppose I don't do well on the test?

A. Your college will interpret the results of the test and determine which courses you are prepared to take. Your score will not affect your grade point average in any way.

Q. Will I have to pay a fee to take the test?

A. No. The State of New Jersey has provided funds for the development and the administration of the test.

Q. Where do I take the test?

A. Get in touch with your college for the place and time of testing.

Q. How do I find out how I did on the test?

A. A report will be sent to your college. On the day of the test, you will be told the reporting procedures your college will use.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST

The first part of the test measures your skills in certain areas of English. It consists of four sections: Essay, Reading, Sentence Structure, and Logical Relationships. These sections of the test are designed to show your strengths and weaknesses in particular skills and to determine whether or not those skills are at a level that indicates you are prepared to *begin* regular college courses.

The second part of the test measures your quantitative and elementary algebra skills. It consists of two sections: Computation and Elementary Algebra.

The following paragraphs will tell you more about the English and Mathematics sections of the test.

The Essay. You will be given 20 minutes to write an essay on an assigned topic. In such a short time, you may not be able to write a polished essay because you will not have time to rewrite what you have written. In general, the scoring of your essay will take into account how well you phrase your ideas and organize them, whether you use specific examples to support your ideas, and whether you follow the conventions of standard written English.

Reading Comprehension. 30 minutes, 40 questions. This section of the test indicates how well you understand what you read. You will be given short passages to read and asked to answer questions about those passages. In addition to a total score for Reading Comprehension, you will receive cluster scores to let you know how well you understand main ideas, understand direct statements, and know how to make inferences.

Sentence Structure. 30 minutes, 35 questions. This section of the test indicates how much you know about the way parts of a sentence fit together. You will receive cluster scores to tell you how well you understand what complete sentences are, how coordination and subordination should be used, and where modifiers should be placed.

Logical Relationships. 30 minutes, 50 questions. This section of the test indicates how well you understand the logical relationships between words, between ideas, and between sentences. In addition to a total score for Logical Relationships, you will receive cluster scores to let you know how well you categorize ideas, use appropriate connectives, make analogies, and recognize principles of organization.

Computation. 35 minutes, 30 questions. This section of the test measures your ability to perform basic arithmetic operations and to solve problems that involve fundamental arithmetic concepts. The questions cover operations with whole numbers, operations with fractions, operations with decimals and percent, and arithmetic reasoning. You will receive a total score for Computation.

Elementary Algebra. 35 minutes, 30 questions. This section of the test measures your ability to perform basic algebraic operations and to solve problems that involve elementary algebraic concepts. You will be tested on operations with real numbers, operations with algebraic expressions, and the ability to solve equations, inequalities, and word problems. You will receive a total score for Elementary Algebra.

Many different kinds of multiple-choice questions are used in the test. A sample of these questions and of an essay topic follows. The answers to the multiple-choice questions appear on page 6.

I. THE ESSAY

You will have 20 minutes to plan and write an essay on a topic like the one below. Read the topic carefully before you begin writing. Your essay should be well organized and carefully written. Be sure to use specific examples to support your ideas. Write only on the topic assigned; an essay on another topic will receive no credit.

You may want to write an essay on this sample topic for practice.

> Almost every home in the United States has a television set, and it cannot be denied that television exerts a considerable influence on us. Is that influence a good one, a bad one, or a little bit of both?

In a well-organized essay, give your answer to this question. Be sure to give the reasons for your opinion and to support your ideas with specific examples.

II. READING COMPREHENSION

Directions: The passage below is followed by questions based on its content. Answer all questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or suggested in it.

Questions 1-3

As the official "no swimming" signs become a common sight along the shore of Paradiso Lake, the major hotels are rushing to complete huge lakeside pools in time for the summer invasion of tourists.

1. According to the passage, why are the hotels rushing to build pools?
   (A) They want to seem much more luxurious than they can really afford to be.
   (B) There will be new taxes on pools this summer.
   (C) People will probably not be able to swim in the lake this summer.
   (D) Tourists usually prefer swimming in pools.

2. The use of the word "invasion" suggests what about the tourists?
   (A) There will be a great many of them all at once.
   (B) They will come by ship.
   (C) They have never been at the lake before.
   (D) There will be a great deal of money spent to please them.

3. Where are the "no swimming" signs?
   (A) At one or two hotels
   (B) At all the hotels
   (C) At one or two places on the shore
   (D) At a great many places on the shore

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III. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Directions: Select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. Choice (A) is the same as the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose answer (A).

Example:

Ancient Greeks ate with their fingers, wiped them on pieces of bread, and tossed them to the dogs lying under the table.

(A) tossed them
(B) tossing them
(C) tossed the bread
(D) they tossed

A	B	C	D
○	○	●	○

4. Tony backed out of the garage, just then Maria turned into the driveway.
   (A) garage, just then Maria turned
   (B) garage, with Maria just then turning
   (C) garage at that time Maria turned
   (D) garage at the same time that Maria turned

5. Walter is wearing the blue shirt standing next to Louise.
   (A) Walter is wearing the blue shirt standing next to Louise.
   (B) Walter, wearing the blue shirt, is standing next to Louise.
   (C) Walter is standing next to Louise in the blue shirt.
   (D) Walter, standing next to Louise, in the blue shirt.

Directions: In the following questions, you will be asked to rewrite sentences in your head. You will be told exactly how to begin your new sentence. Keep in mind that your new sentence should have the same meaning as the sentence given you.

Example:

Being a female jockey, she was often ridiculed.

Rewrite, beginning with

She was often ridiculed . . .

The next words will be

(A) on account of she was
(B) by her being
(C) because she was
(D) being as she was

A	B	C	D
○	○	●	○

6. Ezra decided to walk home after he missed the last bus.

   Rewrite, beginning with

   Having missed the last bus, . . .

   The next words will be

   (A) Ezra's decision was (B) walking home was
   (C) Ezra decided (D) then Ezra decided

7. This disease is carried by mosquitoes, and it has killed seventy people so far.

   Rewrite, beginning with

   So far, seventy people have died of this disease, . . .

   The next words will be

   (A) which is carried
   (B) although it is carried
   (C) having been carried
   (D) with mosquitoes carrying

IV. LOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Directions: For these questions, choose the object that is a specific example of the category underlined.

Example:

fruit

(A) tree
(B) apple
(C) wood
(D) crop

A	B	C	D
○	●	○	○

(B) is the correct answer because apple is a specific example of fruit. Even though fruit may grow on a tree, a fruit tree may be a source of wood, and fruit may be a kind of crop, only (B) apple is an example of a fruit.

8. building (A) walls (B) cave (C) foundation (D) house

9. gem (A) gift (B) ring (C) diamond (D) jewel

Directions: For these questions, choose the category in which the two underlined words belong.

Example:

apple, orange (A) pit (B) yellow (C) shape (D) fruit

A	B	C	D
○	○	○	●

(C) is the correct answer because fruit is the general category that includes apple and orange. An apple and an orange may have pits, be yellow, and have shape, but none of these characteristics indicates the category under which apple and orange may be classified. The only word that names the category is (D) fruit.

10. robin, owl (A) nest (B) feathers (C) wing (D) bird

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11. mother, actress (A) woman (B) house (C) family (D) film

Directions: Choose the word or phrase that best completes the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

Mrs. Brown wanted to cook a turkey, -------- she found she did not have the time.

(A) but
(B) while
(C) or
(D) consequently

A	B	C	D
●	0	0	0

12. The school was named for Roberto Clemente -------- he remains for many young people a symbol of fine character and physical prowess.

(A) when
(B) because
(C) while
(D) in order that

13. Pauline just stood there looking amazed -------- Mr. Jones was telling her that she had won the contest.

(A) while
(B) thus
(C) nevertheless
(D) even if

Directions: In this group of questions, two or three underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement about them. Read each group of sentences and then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

Example:

The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in fifteen years.

Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year.

What does the second sentence do?

A	B	C	D
0	●	0	0

(A) It restates the idea found in the first.
(B) It states an effect.
(C) It gives an example.
(D) It analyzes the statement made in the first.

14. The painting is on the wall next to the small oval window.

The heavy chair is under the painting.

The objects in the sentences are organized according to

(A) their size
(B) their shape
(C) where they are placed
(D) how attractive they look

15. The two boys, John and Leroy, are the same height.

John is heavier than Leroy.

What is happening in the sentences?

(A) Two boys are being used as examples.
(B) Two boys are being compared.
(C) Height is made similar to weight.
(D) Weight is made more important than height.

16. Harry is extremely neat.

There is never a paper out of place on his desk.

How are the two sentences related?

(A) The second sentence gives an example of what is talked about in the first.
(B) The second sentence contradicts the first.
(C) The second sentence compares Harry to other people.
(D) The second sentence tells what caused Harry's neatness.

Directions: Choose the word or phrase that best completes the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

Puppy is to dog just as --------

(A) lion is to jungle
(B) kitten is to cat
(C) baby is to child
(D) leaf is to tree

A	B	C	D
0	●	0	0

Example:

Gasoline provides energy for a car just as sugar provides energy for a --------.

(A) diet
(B) coke
(C) human being
(D) cup of coffee

A	B	C	D
0	0	●	0

17. A chef cooks meals just as a truck driver --------.

(A) delivers goods (B) belongs to a union (C) works eight hours (D) uses diesel fuel

18. Tall is to short as happy is to --------.

(A) merry (B) smile (C) wise (D) sad

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V. COMPUTATION

Directions: Solve each of the following problems.

1. $601 - 49 =$
   (A) 562 (B) 552 (C) 548 (D) 111

2. Which of the following is greatest?
   (A) $\frac{2}{3}$ (B) $\frac{5}{12}$ (C) $\frac{1}{2}$ (D) $\frac{3}{8}$

3. $23.5 \times 3.04 =$
   (A) 714.4 (B) 79.9 (C) 71.44 (D) 7.99

4. What is 12 percent of 150?
   (A) 1.8 (B) 18 (C) 180 (D) 1,800

5. Bill purchased a car and made a down payment of $560. If the down payment was $\frac{1}{5}$ of the purchase price, what was the purchase price?
   (A) $112 (B) $2,240 (C) $2,800 (D) $4,480

VI. ELEMENTARY ALGEBRA

Directions: Solve each of the following problems.

6. If $x = 4$ and $y = -2$, then $x^2y - xy^2 =$
   (A) 48 (B) 16 (C) -16 (D) -48

7. $\sqrt[4]{16} =$
   (A) 2 (B) 4 (C) 8 (D) 64

8. If $2x + 3(x - 2) = 29$, then $x =$
   (A) $\frac{23}{5}$ (B) $\frac{31}{5}$ (C) 7 (D) 30

9. One factor of $3a^2 - 13a - 10$ is
   (A) $(3a + 2)$ (B) $(3a - 5)$ (C) $(a + 2)$ (D) $(a + 5)$

10. The statement, "x is 2 more than y," can be expressed as
    (A) $x > y - 2$ (B) $x > y + 2$
    (C) $x = y - 2$ (D) $x = y + 2$

KEY TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS

(ENGLISH)			(MATHEMATICS)		
1. C	7. A	13. A	1. B	5. C	9. A
2. A	8. D	14. C	2. A	6. D	10. D
3. D	9. C	15. B	3. C	7. A	
4. D	10. D	16. A	4. B	8. C	
5. B	11. A	17. A			
6. C	12. B	18. D			

Edward E. Barr
Chairman, Board of Higher Education

T. Edward Hollander
Chancellor of Higher Education

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Bergen Community College

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Rutgers University—Newark

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Attachment B

Panelists

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illian Anthony, Coordinator of Basic Skills
Essex County College

illian Chambers, Supervisor, Basic Skills
Educational Improvement Center/South

oseph DePierro, Associate Professor of Reading Education
Seton Hall Universtiy

lbert Earisman, Professor of English/Basic Skills Director
Upsala College

onald Edge, Director,
New Jersey Basic Skills Council

arry S. Friedman, Director of Developmental Studies
Centenary College

rances Lynn Galbraith, Teacher of English/Community Relations Coordinator
Lenape Regional High School District

avid Hoddeson, Director, Writing Program
Rutgers University--Newark

homas J. Humphrey, Vice-Principal, Program BASIC
Trenton Central High School

rederic F. Kreisler, Director, Office for State University & Professional Schools
New Jersey Department of Higher Education

illiam Lutz, Chairman, English Department
utgers University--Camden

usan P. McNamara, Chair, English Department
William Paterson College

artha L. Palmere, Supervisor, Language Arts & Social Studies
West Windsor/Plainsboro High School

oseph L. Papay, Chairman, Philosophy Department
St. Peter's College

an Patrick, English Department Coordinator
Sterling High School

ichard Swartz, Coordinator, Academic Foundations Program
Camden County College

Standards for College-Level Entering Students

Key to (3/6): Of the 6 colleges responding to a poll, 3 proposed that standard.

Reading

In order to read at college-level, a student must demonstrate with material typically assigned in freshman college classes:

1. an ability to understand main ideas, supporting evidence, and inference for various types of discourse (3/6).

2. an ability to read at the literal, interpretive, and critical levels (3/6).

Entrance-Level Standards for a College English Course

In order to enter a college-level English composition course, a student must demonstrate the ability:

1. to employ the conventions of formal written English, including sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling.

2. to employ various rhetorical patterns by which ideas may be arranged in written English, and an ability to write paragraphs and short themes that demonstrate a knowledge of these patterns.

3. to critically evaluate written ideas and to write a paragraph that shows evidence of logical thinking.

ATTACHMENT D

Judge's Recording Form:
NEDELSKY METHOD

Test Title: New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test/Reading

Judge's Name: _____

	Circle Number of Choices Identified	P	Question Number	Circle Number of Choices Identified	P
	0 1 2 3		39	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		40	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		41	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		42	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		43	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		44	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		45	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		46	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		47	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		48	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		49	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		50	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		51	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		52	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		53	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		54	0 1 2 3	
	0 1 2 3		55	0 1 2 3	
8	0 1 2 3		56	0 1 2 3	
9	0 1 2 3		57	0 1 2 3	
0	0 1 2 3		58	0 1 2 3	
1	0 1 2 3		59	0 1 2 3	
22	0 1 2 3		60	0 1 2 3	
23	0 1 2 3		61	0 1 2 3	
24	0 1 2 3		62	0 1 2 3	
25	0 1 2 3		63	0 1 2 3	
26	0 1 2 3		64	0 1 2 3	
27	0 1 2 3		65	0 1 2 3	
28	0 1 2 3		66	0 1 2 3	
29	0 1 2 3		67	0 1 2 3	
30	0 1 2 3		68	0 1 2 3	
31	0 1 2 3		69	0 1 2 3	
32	0 1 2 3		70	0 1 2 3	
33	0 1 2 3		71	0 1 2 3	
34	0 1 2 3		72	0 1 2 3	
35	0 1 2 3		73	0 1 2 3	
36	0 1 2 3		74	0 1 2 3	
37	0 1 2 3		75	0 1 2 3	
38	0 1 2 3				SUM

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Attachment F

RATER: _____
(Name)

Is this an acceptable essay for a college student entering a regular freshman composition course? By definition, these students do not need remediation.

	YES	NO		YES	NO		YES	NO
1.	___	___	21.	___	___	41.	___	___
2.	___	___	22.	___	___	42.	___	___
3.	___	___	23.	___	___	43.	___	___
4.	___	___	24.	___	___	44.	___	___
5.	___	___	25.	___	___	45.	___	___
6.	___	___	26.	___	___	46.	___	___
7.	___	___	27.	___	___	47.	___	___
8.	___	___	28.	___	___	48.	___	___
9.	___	___	29.	___	___	49.	___	___
10.	___	___	30.	___	___	50.	___	___
11.	___	___	31.	___	___	51.	___	___
12.	___	___	32.	___	___	52.	___	___
13.	___	___	33.	___	___	53.	___	___
14.	___	___	34.	___	___	54.	___	___
15.	___	___	35.	___	___	55.	___	___
16.	___	___	36.	___	___	56.	___	___
17.	___	___	37.	___	___	57.	___	___
18.	___	___	38.	___	___	58.	___	___
19.	___	___	39.	___	___	59.	___	___
20.	___	___	40.	___	___	60.	___	___

State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
225 WEST STATE STREET
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TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

MEMORANDUM

July 22, 1980

TO: Basic Skills Council

FROM: Donald Edge, Director DE

SUBJECT: Weekend Nedelsky Conference: Recommendations and Conclusions

The weekend Nedelsky conference was spent establishing cut scores for the NJCBSPT language skills tests and essay, and a conference report, reviewed and approved by the conferees, has been sent to the Council with copies to the Tests and Measurements Committee. The report will serve as one part of the rationale for the cut scores the Council uses in its annual report to the Board of Higher Education on the basic skills proficiencies of students entering New Jersey public colleges and universities in the fall semester.

Other matters were discussed at the conference, and three became panel recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The NJCBSPT should be strengthened by (1) deleting three clusters--Placing Modifiers Appropriately, Categorizing Ideas, and Making Analogies; (2) adding to Reading Comprehension a cluster testing the ability to recognize the difference between a main idea and its supporting details; (3) using item types that demand critical thinking skills.

Recommendation 2

In evaluating writing, an essay is absolutely necessary, and the essay topic should invite the writer to draw from a full range of critical thinking and organizational skills so that the evaluator can make objective and discriminating decisions.

In writing assessment, expository essays are more appropriate than narration and description, since these invite limited organizational techniques and may measure imagination and experience rather than writing.

In addition to narration and description, exposition should be taught beginning in the elementary grades; however, since narrative/descriptive essays have limited uses for evaluation and do not readily admit objective judgment and a full range of scores, at all levels only expository essay topics should be assigned when the essays will be used for placement and/or assessment.

Recommendation 3

Expository writing should be given more attention than it now receives in secondary schools, and an expository essay should be included in the 9th grade Minimum Basic Skills Test as a measure of the basic writing skill most often demanded and more readily evaluated.

The secondary school panelists agreed to an independent recommendation:

Recommendation

The nature and relative difficulty of the NJCBSPT suggest that this test or a version of it could be administered in place of the 11th grade Minimum Basic Skills Test to all 11th graders who have successfully completed the 9th grade MBST; the NJCBSPT elementary algebra test, however, should be administered only to those high school students who have taken an elementary algebra course.

Here are some concluding comments concerning the panel's limitations and potential:

Limitations of the Panel

1. More minority panelists were needed, although experience indicates that minority and non-minority professionals produce similar ratings.

2. Panelists did not take the test beforehand to become familiar with it and to prepare for the evaluation procedure. It might be argued that this was not a limiting factor.

3. To save discussion time, correct answers to the language skills multiple-choice test items had been identified by pencil check marks. This was not a help but a hindrance, and it may have affected the random distribution of error. Some panelists covered these check marks, some added checks to all items, but none of this should have been necessary. It was the perception of the panelists that the marks did not affect their scoring.

4. The cut scores were arrived at through a pre-determined method: alternative approaches were never explored.

5. There is no empirical proof demonstrating that the Nedelsky Method is superior to the Angoff Method (explained in the Zieky and Livingston Manual).

Reason suggested that finer distinctions would be made by the method calling for the panelists to make three decisions about each item, rather than the single decision about each item called for by the Angoff Method. (More decisions increase the likelihood of error, but the error is likely to be randomly distributed, and positive and negative error tend to cancel each other out.)

6. The cut scores were based on minimum proficiency. A second cut score indicating demonstrated proficiency would produce three useful placement categories: (1) deficient; (2) marginally proficient--to be decided according to each college's standards; (3) proficient.

7. There was not enough time for the panel to compare their item analysis with other item measures (deltas, r-biserials, etc.). An item analysis comparison might shed some light on the relative validity of the Nedelsky method for setting cut scores.

Potential of the Panel

The secondary education panelists have demonstrated expertise, represent administrative and academic organizations, and, given their familiarity with the NJCBSPT, should be part of any joint committee intending to study cooperative secondary/post-secondary basic language skills testing and remediation.

cc: Chancellor Hollander
Panelists
Frank Winter